

The Committee could do nothing but give general instructions to the Librarian and see that such instructions were faithfully carried out, and that the discretion entrusted to him was exercised for the public service, and not abused to any unlawful purpose. Accordingly between the Messrs. Johnson, booksellers of Philadelphia, and the State Librarian there has been for many years an arrangement that the Librarian should furnish to those booksellers as they required them, such of our reports as we could spare at the price of five dollars per volume, the State of Maryland taking in return other works at current prices. These and other surplus volumes have also been disposed of to other persons, always, at the price for the Reports of five dollars per volume. There is not in the Library, within my knowledge, perhaps there never has been any express written authority for these transactions. But I think the General Assembly will agree with me, that considering together the resolution of 1832, and the practice of the Library, and looking at the fact of the annual or biennial visitation of the Library by the Committee for a period of twenty odd years; when there is not to be found anywhere, one word, not one line or syllable in any law, journal or public document in condemnation of the practice; that a man who could believe it has existed without the sanction of law in the continuous approbation of the Library Committees, would be fit for no place outside the walls of a Lunatic Asylum. The works added to the State Library within the last three years by exchange of surplus volumes, if they had been paid for in money would have cost the State Treasury near two thousand dollars. Of the surplus volumes which have been exchanged for them; I think at fair prices, there were upon the shelves of the Library fifty or a hundred in a few cases perhaps three or four hundred copies. These volumes lie upon the shelves from year to year, and perhaps would lie from century to century untouched, but by the worm, or the slowly-consuming ravages of time. The State purchased one hundred and ninety copies of each volume of the Maryland chancery decisions. The act of 1852 directs the distribution of about one hundred copies to different officers. The present Librarian thinks he has faithfully distributed according to law the volumes which came to his hands. The eight copies designated for the use of the General Assembly have not been given out of the Library. Supposing my predecessors also to have carried out the law there ought to have been in the Library after this distribution directed by the act of 1852, ninety copies of each volume. If there has been in any cases an accidental neglect to distribute any of these volumes, the number not distributed ought to be in the Library additional to the ninety volumes. The present Librarian has disposed of eleven copies of the first volume and there are now about eighty, I think eighty-one copies of that volume in the Library. He has disposed of sixteen copies of the second volume and